

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR UPDATE

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SERVING BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD

November 2023

Preserving Philmont Takes Priority

By Caitlyn Kviz

Land owners, conservationists, public policymakers and corporate representatives gathered at the Philmont Training Center August 21 to 25, 2023, for the inaugural Philmont Land Management Symposium. The event aimed to address a variety of land management issues and climate-related events threatening Philmont today while planning for the future.

"We want to continue to preserve the beauty of Philmont for future generations," said Degas Wright, chairman of the Philmont Ranch Committee. "But we're going to extend our impact beyond the boundaries of Philmont by hosting the Land Management Symposium to not only address the challenges that we face here at Philmont, but also the environ-



Seth Mangini, geoscientist at Philmont, explains his research on arroyo systems to symposium participants at Bonita Creek. (Philmont Photo)

Land Management (Continued on page 7)

Ambassador At Philmont

Danielle Ballantine: Summer Villa Philmonte Guide

There's no better way to spend your retirement than working, says Ambassador Danielle Ballantine, as long as it is working at Philmont as a Villa Guide which she did last summer.



"I knew I was retiring from my career as the Communications Director at The Academy of the Holy Cross high school in Maryland, and I was looking for a fun way to spend the summer as I eased into retirement. Working at Philmont sprang to mind

immediately so I put in an application in February."

The great thing about being a guide is that you learn a lot said Danielle. "The Villa Curator, Ruaidhri Belfry Crofton, does an awesome job helping the incoming staff learn about the history of the Villa and its deep connection to Philmont. We were all sent a copy of Beyond the Hills, the biography of Waite Phillips, and his Epigrams, to become more familiar with Waite's story. We also received a Tour Guide handbook that was a tremendous help to learn about the house, its history and the artifacts." Villa Guides also help at Chase Ranch and receive similar instruction about that museum and the Chase family.

Guides have a lot latitude in their presentation as well as big responsibilities. "We were taught how to develop our tour and how to care for and clean the artifacts. We weren't asked to memorize a script, but rather to develop a tour that incorporated the story about the Phillips family and their home and how it related to the development of the Philmont Scout Ranch. I found that I would vary my tour depending on the type of participants."

Though Danielle became very adept at giving tours, occasionally the lack of a script caused some smiles. "While I was still learning everything, I made a small mistake in

Villa Guide (Continued on page 3)

Ambassadors Chase Peaks, Earn Arrowheads on Autumn Trek

By Daniel Yee, Philmont Ambassador

For years now, there's been an arrowhead-shaped hole in my Scouting career. Fortunately the Philmont Ambassador Autumn Adventure was able to rectify that.

Ambassadors have been participating in Philmont Scout Ranch's Autumn Adventure treks for several years. These are a unique way to see the backcountry in the off season. In 2021 they hiked through the north country. Last year they experienced the south country, crisscrossing the Rayado area and went to the top of Trail Peak (10,250 feet).

This year they had their sights set on something far more ambitious: Mt. Phillips, the second highest peak on the ranch at 11,736 feet.

"This autumn trek was by far the most intense but most rewarding," said Steven Gold from Hillsboro, OR and a troop committee chairman in the Cascade Pacific Council. "The friendships rekindled and made were a big part of the experience. However, this trek was not for the faint of heart."

Autumn Adventure treks are held from

the middle of September through October. To qualify for an Arrowhead Patch, participants spend at least five nights in the backcountry, hike at least 25 miles and perform three hours of conservation work.

For me, I never had the chance to go to Philmont as a youth. Although I've been on several day hikes during Philmont Training Center conferences and ran in the Philmont Trail Race's "Heavy Half" last fall, I've always wanted to go on a trek.

After a day at basecamp doing the medical recheck and dividing up our crew gear and five days of food, our 7-day Ambassador trek began with a ride to the Cito Trailhead. From there we hiked past the Demonstration Forest to Hunting Lodge where fly fishing rods were waiting for us to try our luck at the Cimarroncito Reservoir. Avery Stupka, our ranger, also took us on a day hike to Clark's Fork.

The next day was the hardest of the trek, hiking from Hunting Lodge along the North Fork of Cimarroncito Creek to Cypher's Mine. Although it was a short distance at about 3.5 miles, the trail climbed

Autumn Adventure (Continued on page 8)



Steve Gold, Daniel Yee, Ranger Avery Stupka, Tom Kube, Bob Weagraff, were photographed by William Sloan (not pictured) as they paused for a group photo at Comanche Peak.

Reservations Open for 2024 and 2025

Make sure all units in your Council know that they can sign up for Treks for both 2024 and 2025 now.

Also, three advisors are recommended for 2024 and will be required for 2025.

Waite Phillips Declined Silver Buffalo Award

The Boy Scouts of America recognizes leaders and supporters who have demonstrated extraordinary service to youth at the national level with the Silver Buffalo Award.

It may seem curious that Waite Phillips is not on the list of over 800 leaders who have been so honored over the past decades. His omission is not because Phillips was not asked to receive the award. He was - twice. And twice, he declined.

On the second instance, in May 1950, Phillips explained that he thought any award was premature. From the archives of his correspondence are his thoughts: "With all due regard for the generous thought of you three gentlemen," he wrote to BSA President Walker Head, "I prefer to wait until proof is established that an award of merit for it has been earned. This will not be true regarding me until such time as my original plan has been brought to maturity for making boy scouts and their adult leaders the sole beneficiaries of this enterprise, and that

Phillips (Continued on page 8)

It's Not the "Off Season" – It's Camp Marketing Season

Editor's note: Many Philmont Ambassadors are also active on their Council's Camping Committee. This article by Andrea Watson, former PTC Director, offers ideas on Council camps that can apply to promoting Philmont and the Philmont Training Center as well.

By **Andrea Watson**, BSA National Director of Outdoor Programs and Properties

You've probably been asked a few times – what's it like for camps now that it's the "off season"? The dining hall is silent and empty, your camp staff has returned to school or other jobs, and some may think it's time to take a long winter's rest before next summer. But don't be fooled! Now is go-time for marketing your summer camp programs!

What does summer camp marketing look like for Scouting? Well first, it starts by acknowledging that there are several audiences that need specific, unique marketing. This also varies by program type.

For example, our Scouts BSA troop audiences include youth (especially the patrol leaders council), the troop committee, and parents. For Cub Scout packs, parents are absolutely the most important audience, especially Cub Scout moms. As we consider the marketing steps to take, creating separate marketing campaigns for younger



youth programs like Cub Scouts versus older Scouts in Scouts BSA and Venturing is important. When setting up your marketing campaigns, here are some things to consider during camp marketing season:

1. **Communication** – Maybe even overcoming communication is critical. For many Scouts BSA troops, fall is decision time for next year's Scout camp. And for those units who may decide later in the Scouting program year, fall is likely when they are listing all of the options that may be available. Look for units who haven't been to your camp on rotation in a few years. What about troops who missed camp the last couple of years to COVID-19? Break down your communication strategies into these various subsets of the larger audiences we mentioned above. Calls and texts can go a long way to reach out to your units.

2. **Schedule it out** – Marketing doesn't just happen and being intentional is key. What are you doing each week, month and season to promote next summer's camp programs. Consider adding a variety of touch points on various platforms in your marketing schedule. Once you build it, executing it will be that much easier. Your camp staff may be a great tool to help you build the plan and make it happen too!
3. **Vary your messaging** – Marketing doesn't just have to be "sign up today". It can also include "Scout leaders – we saw this neat article about camping and thought you would enjoy it." Consider adding freebies – everyone loves a good deal and your marketing plan could include drawings for free giveaways just for opening the marketing email.
4. **Google** – Let's be honest, before most of us do anything we either ask Alexa, Siri or Google it. Google your Scout camp and see what comes up. Put on the "hat" of one of your audiences and google from their perspective too. Likely they won't google your actual camp name; rather, they will google "scout camp". Take a look at your camp website and ensure its easy to navigate for each of your audiences.
5. **Finally** – Consider hosting an open house! Focus on units who haven't been to your camp. Perhaps they aren't aware of all the amazing things happening right in their own backyard. Provide a "taste of summer camp" style experience so every audience has a chance to see what incredible adventures your camp offers.

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Ballantine Served on Staff as Villa Guide

Villa Guide (Continued from page 1)

the formal dining room. There is a portrait of Charles Beaubien and his wife Paulita there, and we usually talk about Beaubien and his partner Guadalupe Miranda. I mistakenly called him Carmen Miranda, and now I always picture him [as the 1940s Brazilian singer] with fruit on his head."

Danielle's favorite moment during a tour is when she brings a group from the ground floor up into the living room. "They often gasp at how large and beautiful the space is – I really enjoy that. Many people have remarked that even though the house is large (28,000 sq. ft.), it still feels like a home. I agree. It doesn't feel ostentatious."

Being a Villa guide is a paid position that runs from May 26 to August 22. They work 5 days and have 2 days off, but they are not on a strict weekly schedule since weekends have to be covered as well. Like other seasonal staff, they are assigned canvas wall tents and have a roommate. Guides are just one of the more than 1,000 seasonal positions [found here](#) that must be filled every summer.

"I enjoyed getting to know the permanent and other seasonal staff. We got to go on field trips to visit other sites and enjoyed hanging out with each other," recalled Danielle. "I'd absolutely do it again!"

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An article on "Putting Philmont in Your Future" for your Council Newsletter can be downloaded from the Philmont Ambassador Resources page [here](#).

Steve Nelson Inducted into WSF Baden-Powell Fellowship



Retired Camping Director Steve Nelson (center) was inducted into the World Scout Foundation Baden-Powell Fellowship on October 8, 2023 by Crown Prince Guillaume of Luxembourg (left) and King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden (right) at a gala black-tie dinner at Kandersteg International Scout Center in Switzerland on October 8, 2023. More information on the WSF can be found at www.worldscoutfoundation.org. (WSF Photo)



PTC International Adventures Conference

What can I do with my Scouts to help them understand that they belong to a much larger Scouting movement? Where's the next World Scout Jamboree? What is a Moot? What International Scouting events can we go to? What is Jam Cam and how can my Scouts participate?

Leaders wanting to know the answer to these and other questions should attend the International Adventures in Scouting conference at Philmont Training Center during the week of June 16 to 22, 2024. Check out all the other PTC conferences [here](#).

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Permanent World Jamboree Located in the Alps

Philmont is not the only major Scout Camp in the world. Among the many others, Kandersteg International Scout Center (KISC) founded in 1923 in Switzerland, stands out as being as the vision of Lord Baden-Powell. After the success of the first world jamboree in 1920 in Olympia, England with 8,000 scouts from 33 countries attending, he dreamed of finding one place in the world where the "Jamboree" feeling of world peace could happen all year long.

He found that place in Switzerland. Located on the former site of a construction camp for a railroad tunnel through the Alps, KISC has become a hub of activity for Scouts from around the world.

Kandersteg can be compared more to a Jamboree with daytime and evening activities than to a multi-day high adventure experience like Philmont. Activities are available for all scout age groups and offer corresponding challenges. These

range from easy day hikes to rugged overnight trips on mountain trails as well as in-camp games and activities. Being in the Alps, skiing and snowboarding are popular in the winter. Scouts can also explore the wider area on train trips to nearby Swiss towns such as Interlaken and Bern.

At the core of activities are the interactions between Scouts from many different countries. It's not unusual to see Scottish Scouts in kilts playing games with backpacking groups from Slovenia and Rovers from Brazil. The buildings, food, sports, campsites, and chalet rooms all have an international flavor to them. Fridays feature a campfire with troops sharing their country's songs, skits and dances. Units and individuals can camp or stay in roofed housing.

More information is available at www.kisc.ch.

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Kandersteg photo

International campfires are a memorable part of a Kandersteg experience.

Rayado Women Celebrate 50 Years of Life-Changing Adventures

By **Thak Phillips**

"I look back and I remember the questions I got asked by the campaign director," said Kathy Leach, one of the first woman rangers at Philmont, and a leader of the first ever Rayado women's trek in 1973. "He said, 'You know, are girls this age going to be interested in going?' That was number one. Number two was, 'Are they really going to be able to handle the physical and the mental challenges?' And number three was, 'Are you gonna be able to find enough people for a trek?' And it was yes, yes, and yes to all three of those questions. To me, that was the biggest accomplishment ever. After that summer, I'd never hear those questions asked again."

Leach recalls the value of the opportunity to develop yourself in the outdoors in a time when the opportunities for women were limited. Two-thirds of the girls had never backpacked before, with little idea of what to bring. One girl brought construction boots, and another showed up with no gear at all. But despite all the blisters, Leach knows the girls valued their experience.

"They were just excited to be there, excited to meet each other, doing all sorts of fun programs that they had never done: rock climbing when they got to Cito and rappelling for the first time. Their eyes were as big as saucers."

This year, Rangers Katie Keenan and Katherine 'Kat' Hansen carry on the Rayado tradition. The program focuses on developing skills in navigation, wilderness backpacking, and positive group dynamics, instilling a sense of independence and self-reliance in its participants. Scouts travel from all over the country to spend three weeks on a highly curated experience designed to bring out the best in each individual.

Rayado primarily differs from other special treks, like STEM or Trail Crew, in that the details of the trek are largely shrouded in mystery. For example, while participants would know and expect to take care of farm animals during a Ranch Hands trek, day-to-day activities are not specified to Rayado participants.

All treks involve pushing the physical and emotional limits of Scouts, but Rayado truly exemplifies that. Keenan and Hansen spend days coordinating with staff camps,



Crew RW-1 celebrates in their multicolored sombreros at sunrise on Baldy Mountain. *Photo by Aspen Adams*

planning activities, and purchasing items that add to their overall experience. In RW-1's case, some of those items were multicolored sombreros.

'Expect the Unexpected' is the famous tagline for Rayado, and it rings true from the moment participants arrive. As an individually-registered trek, the girls meet their crew for the first time the day they set foot on Philmont property.

Participant Ila Bumagin, 17, went on her first trek last summer. After loving her experience, and hearing about Rayado from various staff camps, she decided that it was the next step. She was initially worried whether or not she would get along with a group of strangers, but those worries were pushed aside as soon as she met them.

"I was like, oh, these people also like hiking. That's great. And then you kind of can't worry about any thing. You're just forced into it," said Bumagin. "And obviously, everyone here is wonderful. And I feel like, it's just gonna go well."

"The Rangers really make it so fun for us and have so many awesome things planned. I really learn to just hike and not think about what's going to happen next, and be prepared for anything."

Participant Kayla McVickar, 16, has found the trek mentally challenging but extremely rewarding. She has become good friends with crew member Maggie Han, with whom she shares some of her favorite Rayado memories.

"I'm really close with Maggie. She's

from Kentucky, which is interesting, because we would talk about things like when it snows. And I was like, 'Do I know when it snows? No, I don't. I live in San Diego, California. It doesn't really snow there.' And it's just weird, seeing other people's perspectives on things that don't happen to me. It's so cool."

McVickar has also found that Rayado has helped her work on some of her personal struggles.

"When we're hiking, I do a lot of reflecting on my life right now. I'm going into my senior year and focusing on what I want to get out of this trek. I'm definitely learning patience. I am kinder to myself and don't doubt myself as much. I feel like I often catch myself thinking, 'I don't know why I'm on this trek. I'm not up for it'. But then I'm like, 'No, I am up for it. I'm doing it right now.'"

The crew, at this point in their trek, had two more weeks left to go. Although they don't know what's going to happen, they can count on the fact that women who went through the Rayado experience fifty years ago look back fondly on it today.

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**Registration for
Rayado and all
Individual Treks for
2024 is now open.**
[Click Here](#)



Urraca Staff entertain crews at a campfire with the mesa forming an appropriate backdrop. (Philmont Photo)

Focus on the Backcountry

Urraca Mesa Tales of Eerie Happenings Don't Deter Crews

Elevation: 7,966

Water: Natural Spring

Urraca Mesa is an imposing formation in the South Country of Philmont Scout Ranch in more ways than one. The mesa has a long history of mythical and supernatural associations, dating to the local indigenous tribes, some of whom believed it to contain the gateway to the underworld. There exist a variety of other more recent ghost legends, some from the land's Mexican occupants, others from those in the cattle trade who used it as a winter home for their livestock, and still others from the early days of the area's use as a Boy Scout ranch. These involve, among other things, unexplained blue lights, wandering murderous monks, amorphous horsemen dressed in black, and tales of a lost Scout.

The mesa has several more worldly peculiarities to which some of its mystique may be attributed. These include the presence of a large quantity of magnetic lode-stone which serves to disorient the compass of anyone who ventures too close to

it. The mesa's vastness and complete flatness make it easy to become lost on it. It even forms the shape of a skull on a topographic map. The mesa has the highest incidence of lightning strikes of any place in the state, making it highly dangerous to be atop it during a storm.

Though the various ghost stories are generally treated with incredulity by the campers and staff of Philmont, there are no camps atop the mesa, and camping is prohibited there unless in exceptional circumstances. Indeed, staffers often scrupulously avoid crossing the mesa at night, and if forced to do so, avoid looking in any direction except forward along the trail.

The program at Urraca includes challenge events which support teamwork among crew members. For this reason, it is a good camp to include early in an itinerary to help forge cooperative ties among scouts.

At night, staff entertain crews with songs and relate ghost stories around the campfire.

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Urraca Man Skeleton Adds to Mysteries

During the summer of 1970, ancient skeletal remains were discovered in an open-air rock enclosure at 8,200 feet on Philmont's Urraca Mesa. The individual, now known as "Urraca Man," was found with over 18,000 glass trade beads, metal-working tools, files, knives, copper bracelets, and butchered animal bones.

The artifacts fix the date of his death somewhere between about 1860 and 1880. Early researchers speculated that he was a "mountain man" or trapper of European descent. More than a decade later, another anthropologist concluded that the remains were those of a Native American.



However, a later complete reanalysis of the skeleton using modern methods was done by Warren K. Lail and Victoria Riley Evans from New Mexico Highlands University and along with Arron J. Roth. Their results were presented at a Society for American Archaeology Conference in 2013. Their findings suggest that Urraca Man was a man of color, likely a mixture of African and Caucasian ancestry and a trader on the Taos-Rayado Trail. Based upon their osteological findings, they determined that Urraca Man was a male, between 50 and 60 years of age at the time of his death, stood between 5'8" and 5'9" tall, and had various bone modifications that indicated he walked with a limp.

The researchers also concluded that the individual died from natural causes as the result of a fall from a height.

The finding of his remains only enhanced the ghostly stories about Urraca Mesa.

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Sustainable Land Management Preserves Philmont

Land Management *(Continued from page 1)*

mental challenges that impact our surrounding neighbors in the state of New Mexico, the Southwest and the nation.”

This event comes on the heels of several devastating wildfires at Philmont within recent years. The 2018 Ute Park fire destroyed more than 30,000 acres across the central country leading management to close [the camping program on] the Ranch for the summer for the first time in Philmont’s history. The 2022 Cooks Peak and Calf Canyon fires devastated 3,000 acres to the South of Philmont, including the Zastrow staff camp and several trail camps. These wildfires are credited with influencing new priorities from Conservation leadership from a reactive to a more proactive approach to preventing wildfires before they begin.

“We’ve got to start somewhere,” said Dave Kenneke, Director of Ranching and Conservation at Philmont. “We need to be proactive in land management, in essence, to do what would have been taking place without the intervention of society. It’s doable, it’s achievable, but it’s a monumental task.”

The week consisted of presentations conducted by various industry professionals, including Marty Parsons and Lee Hughes of Philmont Scout Ranch, Ray Archuleta of the Soil Science Society of America, Brian St. George of the federal Bureau of Land Management, Dr. Doug Cram and Dr. Owen Burney, professors at New Mexico State University, and many others.

“The whole idea is to bring land managers, policy makers and decision makers in the same room, to not only educate them on current practices that they might not be aware of, but to spend some time in the field and actually see those practices being implemented,” said Kenneke.

Besides the classroom-style presentations, participants also spent time in the backcountry to see some of Philmont’s most recent conservation projects.

“Our vision is to make Philmont that ‘land laboratory’ that others can benefit from,” said Wright. “We want to start to network, to get to know each other, in order to find collaborative resolutions or

solutions to these challenges.”

The curriculum included day trips to locations such as the Bonito Creek restoration project led by Seth Mangini, a geoscientist at Philmont who is researching how process-based restoration practices can be implemented at a watershed scale. Another trip to Deer Lake Mesa, led by Dr. Aalap Dixit and Pouli Sikelianos of New Mexico Highlands University and New Mexico State University, respectively, focused on several field experiments conducted to improve the survival and growth of planted ponderosa pine seedlings in the American Southwest.

“To me, perhaps the most fulfilling part of it has been seeing the interaction, the exchanging of ideas, the great conversation that has taken place, the sharing of

examples,” said Kenneke. “We’ve hammered the word ‘networking’ during the Symposium but it has just been wonderful to see that collaboration started, because on a landscape scale, throughout the West and throughout the country, that’s the way to successful stewardship and management of our forests and watersheds and grasslands.”

“We encourage everyone and anyone that wants to make an impact, preserving nature’s beauty, to come along with us for this journey because we’re excited about it, we’re passionate about it, and we will make a difference,” said Wright.

The next Land Management Symposium has been tentatively planned for the week of August 19-23, 2024.

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Fall Catalog
2023-2024

Ambassador Adventure Crew Earned Their Arrowhead

Autumn Adventure (Continued from page 2)

about 1,500 feet and our progress was very slow.

"This was a lot more difficult than I thought it would be," said William Sloan, of Southside, AL, the District Chair from the Greater Alabama Council. "On my last trek we took the Middle Clark's Fork Trail, and it seemed a lot easier."

Although we were all very weary from the rocky climb, there was an ice-cold creek to rest our feet in. Stupka came prepared, lugging tomahawks on his pack so we could try our hand at throwing them at the end of the day.

Day 4 was to be even tougher, with our destination being Mt. Phillips Camp, via Thunder Ridge and Comanche Peak (11,303 feet). Because it had taken us longer than we'd planned the previous day to make it to Cypher's Mine, we decided to adjust our itinerary to stay that night at Comanche Peak camp.

That meant crossing Comanche Peak the next day and making the steep, rocky slog up to Mt. Phillips. On Day 5 we encountered a conservation department crew at Mt. Phillips camp who were working to relocate sumps and latrines. We reached Mt. Phillips after lunch and celebrated with a picture of our hiking boots (and my trail running shoes) around the USGS benchmark on the peak.

"The views from the top of Mt. Phillips at 11,736 feet took my breath away both literally and figuratively," remarked Gold.

Descending Mt. Phillips for the Clear Creek staff camp was another highlight of the trek as we got to hike down a beautifully manicured, rock-free trail that had been just completed over several years by Order of the Arrow Trail Crews. Piles of rocks that had been dug up by hand adorned the sides of the gentle switchback trail.

Day 6 had us following Rayado Creek for several miles until we lunched at Porcupine Camp and then hiked on after taking a break to see the commissary at Phillips Junction. We then made the short but hilly ascent up to Beaubien staff camp where several horses from the ranch came by to greet us as we approached.

To finish up our Trek, we were greeted at Beaubien by Austin St. George, the



ranch's Associate Director of Camping. In addition to being our driver back to base-camp, he made us wonderful breakfast burritos from Beaubien's staff kitchen. In typical Ambassador fashion, we peppered him with questions as he worked to cook hash browns and scrambled eggs for the burritos.

In the end, we had hiked more than 28 miles. Memories of the Trek will remain in the minds of crew members for some time to come.

"Wow! I had been training for months and thought I was ready," said Crew Advisor Bob Weagraff of Laurinburg, NC, and Council Commissioner for the Cape Fear Council. "The elevation in my home of Laurinburg, NC is 217 feet above sea level. Without getting any significant elevation change in my training, once on the trail it became clear that I was not as ready as I thought. That is why this trek was the most challenging. I was the little engine that could, though, but I had to focus mentally and tell myself that I can do this. Ultimately, I conquered."

Despite the challenges, crew members already have their sights on Autumn Adventure 2024 and are looking at an itinerary that would tackle Mt. Baldy, the highest peak on the ranch. Sloan also is working to get a crew together to earn the even rarer

Winter Adventure arrowhead patch with a trek scheduled from February 25 through March 2nd.

The Ambassadors agreed that participating in a trek provided a personal experience that they can share with Scouts and Scouters when they meet and talk about the Philmont experience.

"It gave us Ambassadors a real look at the Philmont backcountry and how treks work," Sloan said. "It is also a great time to unwind and get to know other Ambassadors from around the country. It was a great time of fellowship and relaxation in God's country with a great group of Ambassadors."

Daniel Yee is the Philmont Ambassador for the Atlanta Area Council.

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Phillips Declined Silver Buffalo

Phillips (Continued from page 2)

can only become effective when their transportation charges and camping fees to Philmont have been reduced to a minimum."

Head replied: "It will be a source of keen disappointment... that you still feel impelled to decline the Silver Buffalo Award, which all of us have long felt should be bestowed upon you in recognition of your outstanding contribution to the Boy Scout movement in America."

Even with Phillips' two-time rejection, the Phillips family has two Silver Buffalos to its credit. Waite's older brother, Frank, an early and enthusiastic Scouting supporter and likely influence on his younger sibling, was given the award in 1942. Waite's son Elliot "Chope" was recognized in 1998 for his cowboy-boots-on-the-ground role in helping to carry out his father's vision for Philmont.

Adapted from "A Million Miracles: 75 Years at Philmont Scout Ranch" by David Mullings.

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